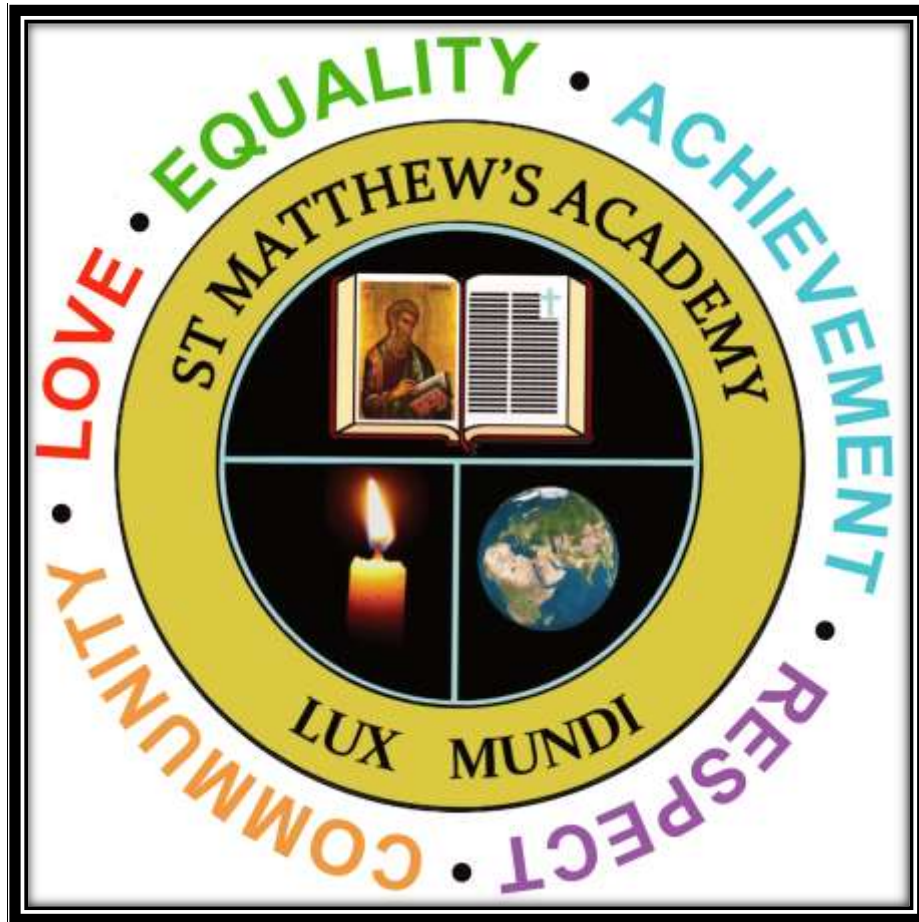


SAINT MATTHEW'S ACADEMY



STANDARDS & QUALITY REPORT

JUNE 2024

St Matthew's Academy is a six-year denominational secondary school situated in Saltcoats, North Ayrshire. The catchment area of the school covers the whole of North Ayrshire. Pupils who attend the 10 denominational primary schools have the right to enrol in St Matthew's while others are enrolled through the placing request legislation. The current roll (September 2023) is 1323, many whom live in recognised areas of socio-economic deprivation: 50% of leavers in 2023 live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1 or 2.

At present, the school has a teaching staff of 90.3 full-time equivalent (FTE). The Senior Management Team comprises the Head Teacher and 4 Depute Head Teachers. There are currently 6 Principal Teachers of Pastoral, a Principal Teacher of Pupil Support and 11 Curriculum Leaders each of whom manages a group of subjects. The teaching staff are supported by a full complement of Administrative, Technician, Librarian and Classroom Assistant staff.

St Matthew's Academy is a denominational school and, as such, we seek to be a centre of excellence providing the highest possible quality of education in a Catholic community where care, cooperation and mutual respect are at the heart of everything we do. We want to give all the members of our community the opportunity and encouragement to achieve their full potential.

Vision

Our vision for Saint Matthew's Academy is one of a community of faith and learning dedicated to Gospel Values. We work together to ensure the effective formation and development of the whole child by providing the highest quality of education. We strive to ensure our young people develop their talents and abilities to best support the common good.

Values

Our values underpin our ethos within Saint Matthew's Academy. Firmly rooted in the Gospel, they are CLEAR and we strive to ensure they are visible throughout our school.

Community - we understand that each of us - pupils, parents, staff, parishes and partners - are called to engage as full members of our Community of Faith and Learning. We must use our gifts and abilities to help and support those around us while at the same time allowing ourselves to be supported.

Love - Jesus teaches us that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart. The second is that we must love our neighbour as ourselves. We show love in our charity, in our service, in our forgiveness, in our compassion and in our patience. Love is the foundation of all our actions.

Equality - we believe that all people are created in the image and likeness of God. By recognising the equal dignity of all, we celebrate difference and strive to create an inclusive, tolerant and welcoming ethos where each individual has the opportunity and support to participate fully in our community.

Achievement - our Catholic school is one in which everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential. By providing high quality learning experiences we encourage all to achieve. We pursue excellence in all that we undertake to ensure each member of our community has opportunities to develop and grow their talents and skills to fulfil their potential in every area of their lives.

Respect - Gospel Values only truly exist in our interaction with each other and with the world around us. By ensuring that all relationships are built on a mutual and genuine respect we create a Community of Faith and Learning where all can attain their full potential. We have respect for others and for ourselves as we understand and greatly value the gift of life we have been given.

As a Catholic school, our aims are:

- *to promote Gospel values of love, understanding and respect through all our activities and at all times;*
- *to develop all members of our community spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially and physically.*
- *to provide the highest possible standards of learning and teaching;*
- *to develop in our young people awareness of and respect for different cultures and an understanding of our social responsibilities;*
- *to nurture in our young people creativity and aesthetic appreciation.*
- *to provide a safe, stimulating and welcoming environment.*
- *to work in close partnership with parents, the Church and the wider community; and*
- *to provide opportunities for the personal and professional development of staff.*

Our Gospel values are at the heart of the Curriculum for Excellence which Saint Matthew's Academy provides. We strive to ensure our young people have opportunities to put faith and learning into practice. We encourage our students to act justly and with compassion. We challenge them to use their gifts and abilities to work together for the good of the whole community so that they may aspire to become:

- successful learners.
- confident individuals.
- responsible citizens and
- effective contributors.

In order to assess the school's current level of performance, a range of self-evaluation procedures were used including analysis of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examination and other assessment results, visits to classrooms, consultations and discussions with pupils, parents, staff and outside agencies, and detailed consideration of some of the key Quality Indicators (QIs) from "How Good Is Our School 4" (HGIOS4) and "Developing In Faith".

A wide range of evidence was collected in the process of carrying out this evaluation of performance including minutes of meetings, pupil tracking data, classroom observation summaries, staff surveys and focus groups, departmental displays of pupil work, pupil evaluations, press articles, questionnaire results, presentations to various groups, draft policy and procedure documents, improvement plans and evaluations of the impact of initiatives.

Data is measured against a variety of comparators – Authority and National Averages are used to consider whether Saint Matthew's Academy is achieving in comparison to schools across the authority and the country. The key comparator is known as the "Virtual Comparator". This figure is based on young people from the same socioeconomic circumstances as our students and offers an insight into how similar pupils from across Scotland are achieving in other establishments.

For 2021 the absence of external assessment information has led to different patterns of attainment than we have seen in previous years. The results for 2021 should not be directly compared to those in previous years or future years. The 2021 Insight data cannot therefore be used to directly demonstrate subject, school or authority improvement compared with previous years. Care should also be taken when comparing attainment to the Virtual Comparator, or indeed when making comparisons across schools.

Literacy and Numeracy – Leavers Data

(Leavers' data is calculated based on those students who left in Summer 2023 – Summer 2024 leavers data does not become available until Spring 2025 and will be presented in the 2025 Standards and Qualities Document.)

Attainment in Literacy at Level 4 for school leavers continues to outperform Local Authority and National data and is consistently higher than the Virtual Comparator school, which is a measure from the Insight Benchmarking Tool. Attainment in Literacy at Level 5 for school leavers continue to

outperform the Virtual Comparator school. The 2021 data recovered from the dip in 2020. Following this dip a review of the collation of the Literacy data was carried out and more robust processes were implemented to ensure all data was captured in time for the release of Insight Data.

The English Faculty continues to work to improve Literacy at all levels and delivered very good outcomes for leavers with almost 98% achieving at least at Level 4. This reflects the quality of learning and teaching in the Faculty. Effective use of Pupil Equity Funds allows for additional English staffing and this has also had a positive impact.

Establishment	Year	% Level 4 Literacy	% Level 5 Literacy
Saint Matthew's Academy	2021	98.96	94.79
Virtual Comparator	2021	95.73	86.09
North Ayrshire	2021	94.76	85.00
National	2021	94.60	83.41
Saint Matthew's Academy	2022	97.41	94.40
Virtual Comparator	2022	93.88	79.18
North Ayrshire	2022	95.07	83.75
National	2022	94.39	82.02
Saint Matthew's Academy	2023	97.75	90.54
Virtual Comparator	2023	93.02	78.74
North Ayrshire	2023	94.55	81.47
National	2023	93.85	81.48

Attainment in Level 4 Numeracy continues to outperform the virtual comparator. A careful focus on Level 4 Numeracy in S4 drives this consistent performance in Leavers data. Effective use of Pupil Equity Funds allows for additional Mathematics staffing and this has also had a positive impact.

Level 5 Numeracy attainment outperforms the Virtual Comparator. The gap between Saint Matthew's Academy Level 5 Numeracy data and that of the Virtual Comparator has narrowed. Work continues to be carried to out ensure we outperform the Virtual Comparator.

Establishment	Year	% Level 4 Numeracy	% Level 5 Numeracy
Saint Matthew's Academy	2021	97.40	77.60
Virtual Comparator	2021	93.13	75.42
North Ayrshire	2021	89.58	72.32
National	2021	91.70	72.70
Saint Matthew's Academy	2022	93.10	75.43
Virtual Comparator	2022	89.18	66.64
North Ayrshire	2022	91.18	71.38
National	2022	91.26	70.73
Saint Matthew's Academy	2023	91.44	68.92

Virtual Comparator	2023	88.29	67.43
North Ayrshire	2023	91.49	69.28
National	2023	90.89	70.87

Improving Attainment for All – Leavers Data

Lowest 20% - our school continues to ensure that pupils in our lowest 20% are given opportunities to be successful and are fully tracked to ensure that they achieve a positive set of qualifications and experiences. Pupils in this cohort do better at Saint Matthew’s Academy than the Virtual Comparator in each of the previous three years. We have also produced stronger outcomes than all comparator data in the past three years.

Middle 60% - attainment for 2020 leavers was below all comparator data. Work was carried out to address this for future leavers. The 2021 data showed stronger performance against all but the National picture. The 2022 and 2023 data outperformed all comparator data. Work will continue in this area to ensure this improving picture continues.

Highest 20% - attainment has outperformed the Virtual Comparator data in two out of the previous three years. It has consistently outperformed North Ayrshire data and the most recent year shows a significantly stronger performance than all comparator data.

Tariff points for all Leavers showed a significant improvement in the past five years. Careful review of tracking and effective parental engagement has helped to ensure that fewer pupils opt to drop subjects in S6 following unconditional university offers. S6 students are encouraged to aspire to achieve at the highest level possible and in many cases, this means success at Advanced Higher level. In addition to this we have worked hard to introduce a wider range of learning experiences in Senior Phase. Increasing learner pathways means that our young people have more courses to choose from and this is also driving improvement. The school is three years into this new approach and the long-term impact will take time to be clearly established. However, the data below would suggest a positive and consistent picture is emerging.

	Year	Lowest 20% Tariff Points	Middle 60% Tariff Points	Highest 20% Tariff Points
Saint Matthew’s Academy	2021	249	943	1816
Virtual Comparator	2021	211	930	1830
North Ayrshire	2021	161	845	1797
National	2021	165	955	1930
Saint Matthew’s Academy	2022	189	935	2156
Virtual Comparator	2022	137	802	1884
North Ayrshire	2022	156	819	1914
National	2022	156	887	1968
Saint Matthew’s Academy	2023	155	876	2097
Virtual Comparator	2023	122	799	1897
North Ayrshire	2023	133	744	1869
National	2023	147	832	1931

What is meant by “Tariff Points”? They provide a summary view of a wide range of achievements and different awards from a range of providers. They capture the latest and best achievements of a

learner – for example if your child has sat National 5 in Geography and then Higher in Geography the tariff point that is captured is from the Higher.

If a course is SCQF accredited it will be given tariff points – if you are interested in learning about tariff points then please access the Insight Help pages on <http://insight-guides.scotxed.net/support/InsightTariff.pdf>

Almost all our young people are motivated to learn and behave well in class and this is reflected both in the continuing improvements in examination performance as well as by the fact that Saint Matthew’s Academy performs above expectations and better than the Virtual Comparator in many attainment indicators.

Broad General Education

Positive progress continues to be made with regard to the Broad General Education (BGE). All pupils from S1-3 engage with the Experiences and Outcomes in the 8 curricular areas. Staff are confident in their delivery of the BGE and significant progress is being made with regard to assessment and moderation. In many areas, S3 pupils are progressing through the Fourth Level.

The school continues to identify targets for improvement and makes effective use of detailed target setting using the planning and attainment history reports within the school’s electronic management system, SEEMIS. Our bespoke BGE tracking system continues to be used to track learners’ progress and attainment. Education Scotland previously identified our systems as supporting teachers to make effective use of assessment information to plan targets in learning, monitor young people’s progress and make appropriate interventions, where required. They are also helping teachers to make robust judgements of achievement of CfE levels based on each learner’s progress.

Leavers Breadth and Depth

Attainment continues to be very good at Saint Matthew’s Academy.

This section breaks attainment down into the number of qualifications achieved (A to D as shown on the Benchmarking tool - Insight) by a pupil at the end of S4, S5 and S6 compared to the Virtual Comparator school. From the data below, you can see that in all measures, positive trends are apparent over the past five years. This very good achievement is due to the strong commitment of staff, parents and pupils to establishing an ethos of achievement and maximising potential. The school usually delivers a strong supported study programme that takes place in November. This is usually complemented by a similar programme in March and an Easter School programme and Masterclasses that takes place just prior to each SQA examination.

An important aspect of this improvement has been the tracking and monitoring system in Senior Phase which is robust and ensures that all children are tracked regardless of level. Detailed learning conversations take place with all pupils at three key points in the year and this ensure pupils have a clear understanding of where they are in their learning and the next steps they should take. To maintain and enhance improvements in attainment we reflect on all existing learner pathways, identify alternative courses which provide greater opportunities for young people to achieve and continue to review the Broad General Education in S1-S3. This final step ensures young people have the appropriate skills to succeed in the Senior Phase.

Category	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
1+ SCQF 6/H	89% (64%)	85% (63%)	82% (74%)	67% (60%)	59% (58%)
3+ SCQF 6/H	56% (49%)	60% (48%)	64% (56%)	55% (48%)	44% (43%)
5+ SCQF 6/H	49% (37%)	48% (35%)	49% (38%)	38% (34%)	33% (30%)
1+ SCQF 7/AH	22% (26%)	24% (23%)	24% (26%)	25% (21%)	20% (18%)

All percentages taken from the Scottish Government Insight website. Data in brackets represents Virtual Comparator data.

Session 2023 was the second time all pupils in S4-S6 sat formal SQA exams since Covid. As such this was a challenging time for all pupils. Fortunately, fewer S5 felt 5 Higher exams in one diet was too stressful than in Session 2022. This meant that more pupils attempted 5 Highers. However, some opted to sit Highers over two years.

Careful consideration of prior departmental and whole school attainment had previously been employed to establish anticipated outcomes and this data was shared with SQA in the form of Estimates. The 2023 data above the percentage for school leavers achieving 1, 3, 5 or more Highers or Higher equivalent.

Attainment outcomes form the basis for ongoing discussions/monitoring within departments and between PTs and link SMT members. These strategies are shared across the school as well as with the local authority and lead to a number of whole-school initiatives that contribute to improvements in performance on an ongoing basis. The strategies included:

- close ongoing monitoring (pupil by pupil).
- target-setting and tracking reports in S4 – S6.
- gathering evidence early in the session to ensure that pupils either improved their performance or were placed at a more appropriate curricular level.
- undertaking a comprehensive analysis of both S4 and S5/6 prelims and using this analysis to target pupils whose performance lay on the boundaries between levels/grades.
- making further use of the analysis to inform anticipated SQA outcomes at Departmental and Whole School level;
- reviewing the existing curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of each cohort;
- participation in Skills Academy: Life opportunities to recognise wider achievement;
- and sharing information between PTs on strategies to raise attainment.

All departments are utilising a wide range of learning and teaching approaches to deliver the curriculum which is resulting in developing our pupils to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. All students from S1-S3 participated in the Broad General Education last session in line with Curriculum for Excellence expectations. The various approaches being used in classrooms have enabled young people to develop their skills by taking greater responsibility for their own learning as well as developing their ability to work in partnership with others. Through use of Pupil Equity Funding a PT Raising Attainment is in place and delivers a variety of strategies to increase results. Strategies such as active learning, critical skills and assessment for learning are widely used and teachers are reporting notable improvements in young people's thinking and communication skills, increased confidence and a continued improvement in classroom and whole-school ethos. Learning pathways have been developed in Mathematics to allow young people to access the curriculum at the most appropriate level while learning logs are employed across year groups to encourage reflection on feedback.

All attainment is underpinned by high quality learning and teaching. Education Scotland defined learning, teaching and assessment in Saint Matthew's Academy as "Very Good" and we have continued to provide opportunities for colleagues to develop their professional skills. A Principal Teacher (PT) Learning and Teaching has been appointed through use of Pupil Equity Funding. This PT is required to oversee our Continued Lifelong Professional Learning programme, which is designed to ensure skill sets remain current and relevant for all staff.

As part of classroom practice, pupil views are sought both in relation to the learning experience and in connection to individual target setting. All departments display pupil voice outcomes which show the impact of pupil consultation. Senior Students lead quality improvement focus groups involving S1 pupils.

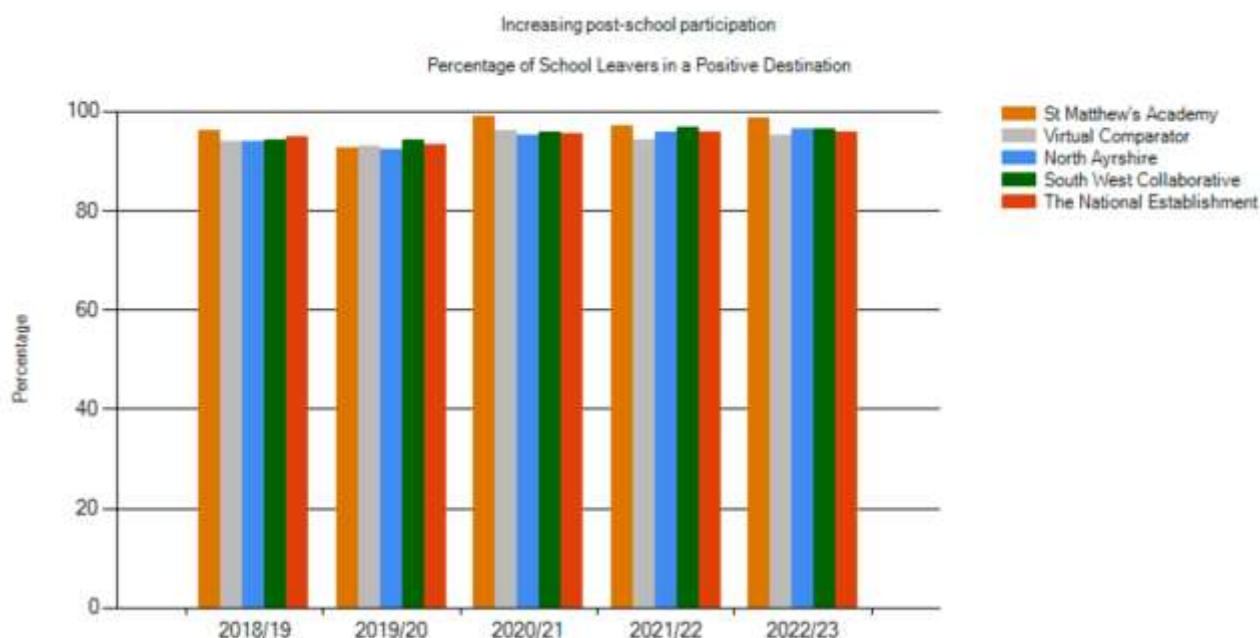
Young people are increasingly able to evaluate their own and others' work. Pupil voice is accessed through regular Pupil Council meetings. The information obtained was reviewed alongside the programme of reflective questions undertaken by all stakeholders. The Improvement Planning group used this data to inform and direct the school improvement agenda.

Skills seminars are delivered at the end of each year of the BGE. This allows pupils to evaluate the skills developed over the course of the past year. Pupil evaluations of the successful strategies employed in S1-S3 were shared with departments and form a key aspect of their self-evaluation and reflection.

Study seminars are delivered to targeted students in S4 and S5 with significant peer learning provided by S6 students.

Most young people are taking part in a wide range of opportunities outside the classroom where they can demonstrate their talents in a variety of ways. Leadership, volunteering and buddying in the Senior School are supplemented by musical, sporting, creative, linguistic and other opportunities many of which are developed in partnership with the local community and outside organisations.

Positive Destinations – Leavers Data



Saint Matthew's Academy continue to have significant success in ensuring that our young people move onto positive destinations when they decide to leave school. In four of the past five years, positive destinations have outperformed all available comparator data. This continues to be a key priority for all within the school. By allying our Skills Academy: Work programme with a robust Careers Education programme delivered through Personal and Social Education and our very good partnership working with local businesses, Skills Development Scotland and Ayrshire College, we ensure that our learners receive appropriate advice and valued experiences. This enables students to make informed decisions regarding their next steps when they decide to leave school.

Young people found it particularly challenging to find employment in the summer of 2020 and significant time and energy was invested in ensuring as many pupils as possible could move to a positive destination. While leaver numbers are up in 2020 and we continue to see fewer young people have chosen to leave at the end of S4, the figures for S5 leavers are increasing and moving back towards pre Covid figures. As such, we are working with Skills Development Scotland to ensure all young people have the skills needed to move to a positive destination. We intend to continue to develop this highly successful aspect of our curriculum to ensure all young people move directly to a positive destination. Pupil Equity Funding was used to appoint a PT Positive Destinations to support young people to access College, University, Work or Training related opportunities.

We continue to benefit from our MCR Pathways Co-ordinator in partnership with North Ayrshire Council and the MCR Pathways national charity. Through this post we seek to ensure that every care-experience young person achieves the same educational outcomes, career opportunities and life chances as every other student.

By delivered group work sessions in S1/S2, our Pathways Co-ordinator supports pupils to build their confidence, improve literacy and numeracy and engage fully in the life of the school. S3 pupils work with an identified mentor from the local community. The young person usually meets with their mentor once a week for one hour. Mentors come from all walks of life and help young people to develop their abilities and confidence which in turn supports them to move into a positive destination when they leave school. More information relating to becoming an MCR Pathways Mentor can be found here - <https://mcrpathways.org/faqs/>

Pupil Equity Fund Allocation

In session 23/24 Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) was applied as follows:

Resources were allocated to address Cost of the School Day issues. A Breakfast Club ran every morning. This was led by volunteer staff before the first school bell of the day and provided all young people with access to free and healthy breakfast options.

Resources were allocated to wider achievement experiences to ensure pupils at risk of missing out had the opportunity to participate in school trips and alternative experiences close the activity gap.

Our Community Wardrobe was opened to all pupils. Resources were used to purchase additional uniform to ensure all members of our school community could benefit from a sense of belonging and pride in being part of the school.

A 6-week Parents in Partnership programme enabled parents and carers to participate in learning and build relationships with school staff.

PEF was used to fund full time Nurture Teacher and Nurture Classroom Assistant. This enabled the Nurture Base (The Nest) to be available to young people at all times.

A PT Learning and Teaching was appointed to lead professional learning, oversee the Learning and Teaching strategy and develop our Skills Framework.

A PT Wellbeing was appointed to lead all aspects of our Whole School Mental Health strategy.

A PT Raising Attainment was appointed to oversee all aspects of attainment, tracking and monitoring and data analysis.

A PT Positive Destinations was appointed to support young people into positive post 16 pathways.

A PT Family Engagement was appointed to enable parents to support their child's education.

An additional Teacher of Mathematics was funded to provide smaller class set and improve Numeracy outcomes.

An additional Teacher of English was funded to provide smaller class set and improve Literacy outcomes.

Alternative qualifications were sourced and provided young people with opportunities to evidence skills in employability.

Wider Experiences

Young people had significant opportunities to participate in learning beyond the classroom in session 23/24.

52 students achieved the Caritas Award which involves volunteering in school and in their local community.

Student ambassadors successfully led the school to our 7th Eco School's Green Flag.

Senior students were trained as Wellbeing Ambassadors and supported younger peers.

The Head Girl, Head Boy and Deputes led S1 Improvement Planning Focus groups and met with Senior Management to identify priorities for Session 24/25.

Seven students graduated from the North Ayrshire Active Schools (NASA) programme.

The Harbour Arts Centre hosted our BGE pupils' Art exhibition.

The Senior Boys football team won the Ayrshire Cup.

The school received the Silver Award at the CyberFirst Awards.

One of our Senior students was awarded second place in the North Ayrshire Young Musician Award.

350 food parcels were distributed to local SSVP groups following our Non-Uniform day in December.

Following the introduction of our School of Rugby in partnership with the SRU, one of our staff members was awarded SRU Volunteer of the Year for Glasgow and the South of Glasgow region.

One of our S4 pupils was elected as the MYSP representative for Cunningham South.

The S2 Boys football team won in the Lisbon Lions inter school tournament in Glasgow.

The S6 students raised £420 for SCIAF as part of their last day charity event.

Pupils and staff travelled with HCPT groups to participate in Diocesan events in Lourdes during Easter.

Over 30 senior pupils participated in the Social Subjects Trip to Poland.

Our Malawi exchange programme continued with pupils from both schools meeting via zoom to discuss the similarities and the differences between the two schools. 4 senior pupils have been selected for our return visit to Mzuzu in June 25.

We introduced the Powering Futures course for S6 students and hosted the presentation event for colleagues in neighbouring authorities.

We held our second BGE Young Poet Awards.

We worked in partnership with Ardeer Golf Club to enable pupils to learn the basics of the sport.

Our 2024 School Show – Sister Act – was a sell out on each of the three nights of its run.

To see a full range of the wider achievement opportunities available to our young people please follow our twitter account - @stmatthewsac

Review of Improvement Planning

School Priority 1:

We will ensure high quality learning experiences for all children and young people to maximise their successes and achievements.

Service Priority

“Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.”

How Good is Our School? (version 4) Quality Indicator

2.2,2.3 & 3.2

Quality learning, teaching and assessment

We continued our work towards embedding our Excellent Learning and Teaching Strategy by focusing on Questioning.

All staff engaged with CLPL and sharing good practice relating to Questioning.

We delivered feedback strategies using our Learning Logs. Further work in this area will continue in the session ahead.

We continued to deliver a well-considered programme of professional learning to ensure Learning and Teaching returns to very good.

Faculty Head engaged with the SQA toolkit to inform improvement.

We reintroduced our Skills Framework programme to S1.

Raising Attainment

We continued our strategy to improve literacy and numeracy attainment through implementation of PEF by appointing additional staff in English and Mathematics.

We worked with Insight Advisors to review our attainment data and identify potential areas for improvement.

We continued to review the range of pathways offered to meet the needs of all learners and improve high quality outcomes for all learners. This led to the full implementation of Higher Media, Powering Futures and a wider engagement with Religious Beliefs and Values.

We continued to work towards SCQF Gold Status.

We continued to work with Primary colleagues to ensure effective transition.

We used our Insight Summary Analysis to inform improvement in practice.

Faculty Heads worked with Senior Management and Insight Advisors to review whole school attainment.

We continued to use school BGE tracking system in tandem with standardised testing to inform improvement and next steps.

Departments reviewed Departmental attainment,

Departmental analysis of curriculum was used to support moderation.

We promoted wider achievement across whole school.

Next Steps:

We will continue to work towards our excellent L&T strategy through a focus on higher order questioning and feedback.

We will continue to embed the use of Learning Logs across the whole school.

Development of learning walk checklist by L&T committee.

Undertake learning and teaching walks across all curricular areas.

Engagement of all staff in professional reading.

We will continue to engage with colleagues in neighbouring schools as part of the NAC Trio Programme.

We will build on the Skills Framework programme and deliver to further year groups.

We will continue to improve literacy and numeracy attainment.

We will support targeted groups across Maths and English through use of Pupil Support and SSR.

We will continue to offer, and explore further, a range of pathways to meet the needs of all learners and improve high quality outcomes for all learners.

We will develop a Dyscalculia strategy through the Learning and Teaching committee.
We will continue the development of digital literacy.
We will work towards Reading Schools accreditation.
We will develop a dedicated Literacy Committee to address gap in BGE level 4 literacy as opposed to BGE level 4 numeracy.
We will evaluate and develop our BGE resources/courses/assessment to improve attainment in the BGE.
We will review examples of best practice locally and nationally.

School Priority 2:

Ensuring equitable education opportunities and outcomes for all learners

Service Priorities

“Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.”

How Good is Our School? (version 4) Quality Indicator

1.2, 2.5, 3.1 & 3.2

Activity Tracker

We continued to develop and enhance the implementation of our activity tracker using scanners and bar codes to record participation.

We used the data collected from the Activity Tracker to provide targeted learning experience to small groups of pupils.

Family Engagement Strategy

We engaged with families alongside the Welfare Rights Officer to access appropriate support

We provided targeted support for care experienced learners through MCR pathways

We delivered increased opportunities for parental engagement through a variety of Family Learning events, subject taster events, health and wellbeing sessions and curriculum information evenings.

Family Engagement Ambassadors in all year groups supported remote learning through delivery of online ‘how to’ videos which encourage parents to support their child’s learning at home.

Our Parent Council continued to play a key role in the development and implementation of our school policies and quality assurance processes.

CLPL

We delivered a variety of CLPL opportunities for colleagues.

We further developed our staff working parties to deliver positive outcomes for young people.

Next Steps:

We will continue to develop the Activity Tracker and embed its use across the school to support targeted interventions.

We will raise awareness of ‘The Promise’ that all care experienced children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected.

We will continue to develop staff understanding of exclusion decision making process and will use data to inform our Post Exclusion Policy and Practice.

We will create a financial education committee to lead our work in becoming a centre of excellence in financial education.

School Priority 3:

Ensure inclusion and equality leads to improved outcomes for all learners

National Improvement Framework Priority

“Improvement in skills & sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.”

How Good is Our School?
(version 4) Quality Indicator

2.2 & 3.3

Skills Framework

We relaunched the skills framework to assist S1 in making of connections across their learning to inform pathways through the BGE and beyond. We identified approaches to tracking skills.

Personalised Learning Pathways

*We continued to develop a targeted curriculum for those pupils at risk of not achieving a positive destination.
We continued to provide opportunities for young people to develop skills for Learning, Life and Work.
We reviewed the qualifications available to young people and sought to expand the portfolio of course available.*

Next Steps:

*We will review and build upon the skills framework to assist young people in making of connections across their learning to inform pathways through the BGE and beyond.
We will continue the delivery of skills framework to S1 and roll out to S2.
We will produce a curricular pathway detailing progression within the SCQF across all faculties.
We will continue to provide leadership opportunities for young people through participation in the SCQF Ambassador Programme.*

School Priority 4:

We ensure that the while learning community has a shared understanding of wellbeing and the children’s right.

Service Priorities

“Improvement in children's and young people’s health and wellbeing”

How Good is Our School?
(version 4) Quality Indicator

2.1, 3.1

Development of Emotional Wellbeing Strategy

*We continued to promote our Emotional Wellbeing strategy and approaches.
Senior students were trained in wellbeing approaches and served as Wellbeing ambassadors in support of younger pupils.
Senior students were trained in Mentors in Violence Prevention.
Staff had opportunities for professional learning and training which enhanced the implementation of the emotional wellbeing strategy.
Pupils had access to Mental Health counselling, bereavement support, MCR mentors, anti-bullying groups and suicide prevention training.
Pupil Equity Funds were used to appoint a Principal Teacher: Wellbeing who had overall responsibility for the strategy.*

Attendance Strategy

*We built on our Attendance Mentors programme.
We reviewed all data relating to attendance.
We regularly monitored attendance to support young people and families.
We reviewed the curriculum to ensure all young people can engage with learning.*

Promoting Positive Relationships strategy

*The Promoting Positive Relationships policy and strategy is now embedded in practice with annual exclusion data now below pre COVID levels in the past 2 years.
We continue to deliver opportunities for staff professional learning in restorative practice and de-escalation strategies.
We delivered the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme to volunteer S6 students. Students delivered this programme to all pupils in S1 and S2.
We continue to work to deliver a learning environment built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships, which lead to high-quality learning outcomes.*

Next Steps:

*We will continue to promote our wellbeing policy and strategy.
We will review our wellbeing strategy.
We will facilitate opportunities for CLPL training which will enhance the wellbeing strategy.
We will provide leadership opportunities through our Wellbeing Ambassador programme.
We will further develop the role of Attendance Mentors.
We will create an attendance committee and develop a new attendance policy.
We will look outwards to identify best practice in addressing attendance challenges.*

School Priority 5:

We ensure children and young people are active participants in discussion and decisions which may affect their lives.

Service Priorities

“Placing human rights & needs of every child & young person at the centre of education.”

How Good is Our School? (version 4) Quality Indicator

2.3, 2.4, 2.5 & 3.1

Catholic Ethos

Our Catholic Ethos continues to be central to all we undertake here in Saint Matthew's Academy. We said farewell to our Chaplain, Father Willie Boyd, who had celebrated weekly mass and Year Group masses for our young people.

We provided a robust programme designed to support our Caritas students.

Students participated in liturgical celebration including Cluster Mass, P7 Welcome Mass and S6 Graduation Mass.

We visited all parishes as part of Catholic Education Week.

We continued to clearly articulate our vision and values and, through the embedded Promoting Positive Relationships (PPR) Policy, we worked to ensure our values were clear and visible throughout all interactions in the school. Whole year group assemblies ensure that our values assemblies were delivered to all students in each year.

We continued to promote Rights Respecting School priorities.

We continued to work with parents and parishes as they support young people on their faith journey.

A notable success was the 52 students who successfully completed the Caritas Award – this translates into 2080 hours of volunteering in the local community and parishes. An excellent example of our school vision in practice.

Next Steps:

By focusing on Developing as a Community of Faith & Learning, we will ensure all young people have opportunity to participate in liturgical celebration.

We will ensure our vision and values are clear and visible throughout all interactions.

We will work with parents and parishes as they support young people on their faith journey.

We will review our daily school prayer to ensure it aligns with our agreed vision and values

We will seek to establish a Cost of the School Day committee.

We will support families alongside the Welfare Rights Officer to access appropriate support.

We will deliver increased opportunities for parental engagement through a variety of Family Learning events such as Parents In Partnership, subject taster events, health and wellbeing sessions and curriculum information evenings.

We will promote communication with families to increase participation at whole school events including parents' nights.

We will actively seek feedback from parents on their views of all aspects of the school.

We will establish a learner participation committee. The committee will be tasked with developing pupil focus groups and familiarising staff and parents with our approaches.

Quality Indicators

Our self-evaluation includes surveys, observations and analysis of data. This allows us to review the 4 core Quality Indicators and judge ourselves against the National guidelines.

1.3 Leadership of Change is evaluated as Very Good.

As part of our engagement with North Ayrshire's Quality Improvement Framework we established that we have a strong shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community. Pupil voice and leadership opportunities were a particular strength.

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment is evaluated as Good.

Post COVID our classes have returned to the creative spaces they were prior to 2020. Classroom observation showed that in many areas, but not all, Learning and Teaching was very strong. Trio visits from colleagues in neighbouring schools supported our work in this area. In the year ahead we will continue to work towards a consistent approach to Learning and Teaching.

3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion is evaluated as Very Good.

Support for all pupils is a key feature of our school. Pastoral support is a strength of Saint Matthew's Academy. Pupil Support likewise. There are a large range of additional supports

available to young people including MCR, School Counsellor and Campus Police Officer. The recent awards obtained in Nurture and Rights Respecting School Gold point to a high-quality system of support for young people.

3.2 Raising Attainment & Achievement is evaluated as Very Good.

Attainment continues to be strong across the school with Saint Matthew's outperforming the virtual comparator in almost every measure. SCQF silver status shows a school making effective use of the full range of curricular options available to our young people.

Conclusion

Session 23/24 saw a full return of all aspects of SQA courses following COVID. Evaluation of the improvement plan suggests many improvements are becoming increasingly embedded in our approaches.

Relationships between staff and pupils were strong and this helped to ensure that exclusions were kept to a minimum. Exclusion continues to be required in a minority of cases but the number of exclusion incidents has reduced in the past 2 years.

2023 leavers results would suggest that young people have coped well with the academic challenges Covid-19 caused earlier in their school career and, while the effects of the pandemic will be felt for a number of years to come, students should be very proud of their success. It is hoped that students take confidence from this success.

We are continuing to see a return to the high level of ambition and confidence that was a feature of pre Covid-19 times. Pupils will continue to be supported throughout this time to ensure they have every opportunity to achieve their potential.

Throughout all that we try to achieve we must never lose sight of the shared vision for Saint Matthew's Academy - Our vision for Saint Matthew's Academy is one of a community of faith and learning dedicated to Gospel Values. We work together to ensure the effective formation and development of the whole child by providing the highest quality of education. We strive to ensure our young people develop their talents and abilities to best support the common good.

Session 23/24 felt much more like a normal year in Saint Matthew's Academy than the immediate post COVID experience. We continued to benefit from the strong support of the overwhelming majority of parents and are hugely aware of the impact this partnership has on the wellbeing and attainment of our young people. It is this partnership with parents and parishes that leads to the high-quality learning experiences we see in Saint Matthew's Academy. We are confident that our partnership approach enables us to provide our young people with the values and skills required to best support the common good and make a positive difference to the lives of others. This will always be the guiding principle of our Catholic secondary school.

Stephen Colligan
Head Teacher
June 2024